MOUNT SPOKANE STATE PARK AND MOUNT SPOKANE SKI AND SNOWBOARD PARK

COMBINED DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE CLASSIFICATION OF LAND AND SKI AREA EXPANSION







SECTION I. INTRODUCTION TO THE COMBINED DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

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1. INTRODUCTION

Mount Spokane State Park is an approximately 14,000-acre park located approximately 22 miles northeast of Spokane in Spokane County, Washington (see Section III, Figure EIS-1). The park provides a wide range of year-round recreation opportunities to a diverse community of user groups. Existing recreational facilities include 85 picnic sites, 3 picnic shelters, a group camping area for 90 people, 8 standard camp sites, parking for approximately 1,588 vehicles, 2 horse feeding stations, 2 comfort stations, 16 vault toilets, 50 miles of hiking/equestrian trails, 50 miles of roads, 3 cabins and the historic Vista House. An existing concessionaire, *Mount Spokane 2000* (MS 2000), operates the *Mount Spokane Ski and Snowboard Park* within a 1,425-acre portion of the park. The predominant land use of adjoining property outside of the park is commercial forestry.

This Combined Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) analyzes both a nonproject and project action proposal including:

- A Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) nonproject proposal to classify approximately 800 acres of land commonly referred to as the Potential Alpine Ski Expansion Area (PASEA), to potentially reclassify approximately 20 acres of land from Resource Recreation to Recreation and to potentially reclassify approximately 1 acre of land adjacent to the Vista House currently classified as Heritage to Recreation for purposes of accommodating proposed recreational facilities.¹
- A project proposal (e.g., tree clearing, facility construction) by Mount Spokane Ski and Snowboard Park to extend alpine ski facilities into a 279-acre expansion area within and adjacent to the PASEA by constructing one new chairlift and seven associated ski trails.²

For ease of reference and to inform the land classification decision that will be made by the Commission, the nonproject DEIS for land classification (see Section II) and the project level DEIS (see Section III) for ski area expansion into the PASEA have been included in a single document along with this introductory section. Although both the nonproject land classification and the project proposal are included within the same document, this DEIS analyzes two distinct and separate actions to be considered by the Commission: (1) analysis of the impacts associated with the nonproject action and the land classification/reclassification decision and (2) analysis of the project level impacts associated with ski area expansion.

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¹ Although the PASEA is frequently described as being 850 acres in size, recent GIS analysis has concluded that the actual acreage of the PASEA is slightly smaller and approximately 800 acres in size. This is primarily due to the technology available now to determine the exact acreage of the area in question compared to what was available to State Parks during the 1999 CAMP process. Subsequent planning documents have used a range of 800 to 850 acres. ² While the PASEA boundary and acreage has changed (see footnote 1), the 279-acre expansion area/study area has not changed.

The Commission uses a land classification system (Washington Administrative Code 352-16) to provide direction regarding the appropriate use of state park managed lands. The classification system evaluates state park lands and places them into one of six land classifications. These classification categories include Recreation, Resource Recreation, Heritage, Natural, Natural Forest, and Natural Area Preserves. In October 1999, Washington State Parks completed a Classification and Management Planning (CAMP) process that classified all lands within the park except for an approximately 800-acre area known as the PASEA.

Land classification for the PASEA will be considered and ultimately adopted by the Commission. The classification categories under consideration for the PASEA include Recreation, Resource Recreation, and Natural Forest (see Section I, section 2.2 – Alternatives Considered). In addition, Alternative 4, as outlined in Section II, will consider reclassifying approximately 20 acres adjacent to the PASEA and reclassifying approximately 1 acre of land adjacent to the Vista House currently classified as Heritage to Recreation for purposes of accommodating proposed recreational facilities (see Section II, Figure II-4).³

A full listing of opportunities and use limitations imposed by specific classifications is detailed in the Land Classification Management Guidelines and Land Classification Compatibility Matrix for Facilities and Activities (see Section II, Appendix 2). Examples of types of facilities and activities that are permitted dependent on land classification include:

- Alpine ski facilities
- Campgrounds
- Cross-country skiing trails
- Day use facilities
- Equestrian trails

- Hiking trails
- Interpretive facilities
- Mountain biking trails
- Nordic track skiing trails
- Snowmobile trails

This document also contains a project action DEIS that considers State Parks approval for various aspects of a proposal from Mt. Spokane 2000 to construct a new chairlift together with seven new ski trails and accompanying infrastructure in a 279-acre area within and adjacent to the PASEA. Consideration of the alpine ski facility proposal from MS 2000 is contingent upon a land classification decision by the Commission that allows alpine ski facility development. In this document (Section II), Land

³ Due to the evolution of mapping technologies from 1999 to present, the PASEA's GIS boundary includes approximately 20 acres to the south of the PASEA that was previously classified by the Commission as Resource Recreation. Without this adjustment to existing land classification boundaries, Alternative 4 would potentially site recreational facilities in a Resource Recreation classification. In addition Alternative 4 would potentially site recreational facilities within less than 1 acre of the existing Heritage land classification adjacent to the Vista House. This action seeks to address this issue and adjust the boundaries of previously classified lands to be more consistent with the potential placement of developed recreation facilities.

Classification Alternative 4 is the single alternative that would allow new alpine ski facilities. The land classification alternatives are discussed in Section II, which includes the nonproject EIS.

2. BACKGROUND

The PASEA is located within the existing ski area concession boundary (approximately 2,233 acres) and comprises approximately 800 acres on the northwest or "backside" of Mount Spokane. The PASEA is largely undeveloped. Current recreational facilities within the PASEA include the Chair 4 Road which is used for snowmobiling in the winter season, the Summit Road and a portion of Trail #140 which is a multi-use (i.e., hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding) single-track trail. Current recreational activities occurring within the PASEA include, but are not limited to, snowmobile use on Chair 4 Road, backcountry alpine skiing, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, mountain biking and equestrian use.

The PASEA was noted as a potential expansion area in the 1997 Concession Agreement between MS 2000 and State Parks. As part of its October 1999 classification action for Mount Spokane State Park, the Commission left the PASEA as an unclassified area within the 14,000-acre Park in order to further study what the eventual classification should be, particularly within the context of a potential expansion of Mount Spokane Ski and Snowboard Park. In 2010, MS 2000 approached the Commission with a conceptual proposal to expand skiing into 279 acres of the PASEA.

Prior to that date, the agency engaged in a master facilities planning process with the community that culminated in the adoption of the Mount Spokane State Park Master Facilities Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) in August 2010. The Master Facilities Plan explicitly excluded the PASEA from the planning effort. At that time, the Commission called for the PASEA to be studied separately after completion of the Mount Spokane State Park Master Facilities Plan to determine if, and when, the PASEA would be classified to allow for lift-served downhill skiing and snowboarding.

On May 19th, 2011, the Commission approved "Amended Option 3," which classified the lands within the PASEA as a combination of the following land classifications: Recreation, Resource Recreation and Natural Forest Area (NFA). This action by the Commission further provided for a more in-depth evaluation of the MS 2000 proposal under SEPA.

Following the Commission's decision, State Parks prepared a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) on the "project action" or the impacts of the construction of a chairlift and seven ski trails within the 279-acre project area. The SEIS built on the Mount Spokane State Park Master Facilities Plan and FEIS that was issued in August 2010. A Final SEIS was released in October, 2012 and Alternative 3 was selected by the Director of Washington State Parks. Alternative 3 would have allowed for the expansion of ski area facilities (i.e., one chairlift and seven ski trails) into the 279-acre portion of the PASEA that the Commission had classified as a combination of Recreation and Resource Recreation in its earlier decision.

However, while the SEIS was being prepared and approved a separate legal appeal was ongoing related to the decision by the Commission to classify the lands (i.e., the nonproject action) within the PASEA without conducting an Environmental Impact Statement. Specifically, on September 17, 2013 the Washington State Court of Appeals ruled that an EIS should have been performed on the land classification decision prior to any decision related to an expansion of the ski area, leading to the preparation of the nonproject land classification DEIS (Section II). As such, Section III of the DEIS updates and builds upon the previously completed Final SEIS from 2012, providing more detail on the affected environment and potential environmental consequences, where necessary, informed by project level biological surveys that were undertaken following the original Commission decision. For some resources analyzed in the project DEIS (Section III), the impacts will be described nearly verbatim from the 2012 document because the project scope and impacts did not substantively change from what was initially presented to the public.

3. SEPA PROCESS

Although combining a nonproject EIS and project proposed action EIS into one document is not a common practice, the Washington State Environmental Policy Act allows the combination of any and all SEPA and non-SEPA documents in order to "reduce duplication and paperwork and improve decision-making" (see WAC 197-11-640 – Combining Documents). Normally, an analysis of a project specific proposed action tiers to a prior decision regarding a nonproject action. However, due to the absence of a land classification in the PASEA and the status of the proposal on the part of MS 2000 to construct new ski facilities within the PASEA, the Commission is combining the nonproject EIS for land classification in the same document as the project level EIS for MS 2000's proposal for a new chairlift and seven ski runs.

The decision to combine both the nonproject EIS and project EIS into one document is intended to avoid improper piecemealing or segmenting of the proposal and avoid understating the combined environmental impacts associated with the actual project being contemplated by the Commission. If the EIS for the nonproject, land classification decision were decided separately from the ski lift and trails project EIS, the decision maker would have only the relatively general and superficial information typical of a nonproject EIS (see WAC 197-11-442 – Contents of EIS on Nonproject Proposals). Such an EIS contains only a very general analysis of all of the broad categories of projects that might be proposed in the future (e.g., horseback trails, developed recreational facilities) and includes potential mitigation measures only at a high level of generality. In this case, by combining the nonproject land classification EIS and the EIS for the ski lift and trails project that has been proposed, the Commission will have the most detailed and accurate information available on the probable environmental impacts resulting from a classification decision.

This document is separated into three sections. The first section provides a general overview of the history, background and process to date, as well as a description of how the analysis complies with SEPA.

The second section consists of the nonproject EIS, which analyzes at a general level all of the broad categories of development (e.g., hiking trails, parking lots, equestrian facilities) that may result under each land classification alternative (e.g., Natural Forest Area, Resource Recreation, Recreation) considered, as well as the No Action Alternative, which would leave the entire PASEA unclassified. The third section contains a project level EIS that analyzes at a specific level the direct, indirect and cumulative impacts associated with the 279-acre proposed ski area expansion project, which would be applicable only if the Commission classified the area as Recreation (see Section II, Alternative 4).

4. PUBLIC SCOPING PROCESS

Scoping occurred for the nonproject land classification EIS and for the project action ski area expansion proposal pursuant to Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 197-11-408 (see Section II, Appendix 1). On November 12, 2013 the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission issued a formal scoping notice and 600 scoping comments were received. The scoping notice originally contemplated two land classification alternatives in addition to the required no-action alternative. These were:

- An alternative that would classify the area within the PASEA above the Chair 4 Road as
 Resource Recreation and the area below the road as Natural Forest Area. Within the Resource
 Recreation area, alpine backcountry skiing would be allowed as a conditional use, but no lift or
 formal ski run facilities would be allowed to be constructed. This alternative is included in this
 document as Land Classification Alternative 3.
- An alternative that included three land classifications within the PASEA. This alternative is included in this document as Land Classification Alternative 4 (see Section II):
 - A Recreation classification in the 279-acre area where MS 2000 has proposed expanding its developed ski area that would allow for the ski expansion.
 - A Resource Recreation classification that conditionally permits alpine "backcountry" skiing in an area that buffers the developed ski area and provides management direction for existing facilities within the PASEA (e.g., Chair 4 Road, portion of Summit Road, Trail #140); and
 - o A Natural Forest Area classification in the area below the Chair 4 Road.

Based on comments received during the scoping process a third alternative in addition to the no-action alternative has been included. This new alternative proposes classifying the PASEA as Natural Forest Area with the exception of the Chair 4 Road, a portion of the Summit Road, and an existing multi-use trail (a portion of Trail #140), which would be classified as Resource Recreation. The classification of these existing facilities as Resource Recreation is necessary because their existence in the PASEA would not be permitted under a classification of Natural Forest Area. Alpine "backcountry" skiing would not be a permitted use in the Natural Forest Area classification. However, other existing uses such as snowmobiling, equestrian uses, and mountain biking could continue to be allowed in designated Resource

Recreation areas (e.g., Chair 4 Road, portion of the Summit Road, the existing Trail #140). This alternative is included as Land Classification Alternative 2 in Section II of this document.

5. SCOPE OF THE LAND CLASSIFICATION DEIS AND THE SKI AREA EXPANSION DEIS

Consistent with WAC 197-11-442, this DEIS considers: (1) a proposal that will provide land classification for the PASEA, and (2) a proposal that would allow for ski area expansion within a 279-acre portion of the PASEA. Pursuant to WAC 197-11-704, land classification is a nonproject action under SEPA. Nonproject actions under SEPA include decisions on policies, plans, or programs rather than site specific development proposals. Examples of nonproject actions include the adoption of comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances. Consideration of the ski area expansion proposal is a project action under SEPA.

Pursuant to WAC 197-11-402(1), EISs need analyze only the reasonable alternatives and probable adverse environmental impacts that are significant. Based on the scoping process, State Parks has identified the following elements of the environment that may be significantly impacted by the facilities and activities that could occur under formal land classification and as a result of the proposed ski area expansion:

- Wildlife habitat supporting populations and occurrences of resident wildlife species within the PASEA and transiting through it;
- Wildlife habitat connectivity to intra-park and regional wildlife corridors;
- Natural forest and native plant associations and communities;
- Soils and slope stability;
- Water quality;
- Introduction of non-native plant species; and
- Scenic resources including viewsheds.

SECTION II: PROPOSED LAND CLASSIFICATION FOR THE AREA KNOWN AS THE POTENTIAL ALPINE SKI EXPANSION AREA DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

FACT SHEET

Proposal/Title:	Mount Spokane State Park: Proposed Land Classification for the Area known as the Potential Alpine Ski Expansion Area (PASEA)
Description of Proposal:	Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Formal land classification and potential reclassification pursuant to Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 352-16 for the area in and adjacent to the PASEA.
Description of Alternatives:	Four alternatives are analyzed: the required No Action Alternative and three land classification alternatives.
Location:	Mount Spokane State Park is located approximately 22 miles northeast of the City of Spokane in Spokane County. Access to the park is almost exclusively by State Highway SR 206. The highway at the park entrance is Mount Spokane State Park Drive.
Tentative Date of	November 2014
Implementation:	
Name and Address of Lead	Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission
Agency and Contact:	1111 Israel Road Southwest; PO Box 42650 Olympia, WA 98054-2650
Responsible Official:	Randy Kline, Environmental Program Manager; 360.902.8632 randy.kline@parks.wa.gov
Required Approvals:	Approval by the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission
Principal Contributors to	Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission
Draft EIS:	1111 Israel Road Southwest
	Olympia, WA 98504-2650 360.902.8638
Date of Issuance of Draft EIS:	August 15, 2014
Scheduled Date of	November 2014
Final Action:	
Location of Copies of Draft	Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission
EIS for Public Review:	1111 Israel Road Southwest
	Olympia, WA 98504-2650
	360.902.8638
	Mount Spokane State Park
	N. 26107 Mount Spokane Park Dr.
	Mead, WA 99021 Weshington State Perks and Regression web page
	Washington State Parks and Recreation web page http://www.parks.wa.gov/856/Mount-Spokane-PASEA-Land-
	Classification and
	http://www.parks.wa.gov/335/Mount-Spokane
Location of Copies of Draft	Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission
EIS for Purchase and Cost of	1111 Israel Road Southwest
Copy to Public:	Olympia, WA 98504-2650
	360.902.8638

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1. PURPOSE AND NEED

In October 1999, the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission completed a Classification and Management Planning (CAMP) process that classified all lands within Mount Spokane State Park except for an approximately 800-acre area known as the PASEA. This nonproject action, which will be considered and ultimately adopted by the Commission, is intended to provide a land classification for future management of the PASEA. Alternative 4 of this nonproject action also considers potential reclassification of approximately 20 acres south of the PASEA from Resource Recreation to Recreation as well as reclassification of approximately 1 acre from Heritage to Recreation in the vicinity of the Vista House.⁴

This DEIS has been prepared in accordance with the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA, RCW 43.21C). This DEIS is not a decision document. The primary purpose of this DEIS is to disclose the potential environmental impacts of implementing any of the land classification alternatives under consideration. The Purpose and Need for the proposed land classification is to provide management direction for park staff and the public regarding the type of facilities and activities that will be permitted to occur within the PASEA.

2. LAND CLASSIFICATION ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

This section identifies and compares a reasonable range of alternatives related to the proposed land classification. There are three "action alternatives" and a "No Action Alternative" included in this range of alternatives. Items that are common to all three action alternatives include:

- All lands in the PASEA below (west) of Chair 4 Road (approximately 170 acres) would be designated as Natural Forest Area;
- Continued operational impacts related to existing and on-going activities and facilities in the PASEA, including use of the Summit Road, Trail #140, and snowmobile and summer recreation use on the Chair 4 Road.

2.1 ALTERNATIVE 1 - NO ACTION

The No Action Alternative (see Section II, Figure II-1 and Table II-1) provides a baseline for comparing the effects of the action alternatives. The No Action Alternative reflects a continuation of existing management practices and activities without applying a land classification. Up to this point, staff has generally managed the area as a de facto Natural Forest Area. However, backcountry alpine skiing has

⁴ Due to the evolution of mapping technologies from 1999 to present, the PASEA's GIS boundary includes approximately 20 acres to the south of the PASEA that was previously classified by the Commission as Resource Recreation. Without this adjustment to existing land classification boundaries, Alternative 4 would potentially site recreational facilities in a Resource Recreation classification. In addition Alternative 4 would potentially site recreational facilities within less than 1 acre of the existing Heritage land classification adjacent to the Vista House. This action seeks to address this issue and adjust the boundaries of previously classified lands to be more consistent with the potential placement of developed recreation facilities.

been informally allowed to continue, even though this use is not otherwise permitted in Natural Forest Areas. Continuing to leave the area unclassified would mean no clear direction from the Commission with regard to management and future development of the area.

2.2 ALTERNATIVE 2 - NATURAL FOREST AREA

This alternative proposes classifying the PASEA as Natural Forest Area with the exception of the Chair 4 Road, a portion of the Summit Road, and Trail #140, which would be classified as Resource Recreation (see Section II, Figure II-2, and Table II-1). The classification of these existing facilities as Resource Recreation is necessary under Alternative 2 because their existence in the PASEA would not otherwise be permitted under a classification of Natural Forest Area. Alpine "backcountry" skiing would not be permitted in the Natural Forest Area classification. However, existing activities such as snowmobiling, equestrian use, and mountain biking could continue to be allowed in certain circumstances in the portions of the PASEA designated as Resource Recreation.

Lands classified as Natural Forest Area are designated for preservation, restoration, and interpretation of natural forest processes while providing for low-intensity outdoor recreation activities as subordinate uses. Under all classification alternatives, all land within the PASEA below (west) of the Chair 4 Road would be classified as Natural Forest Area.

Examples of permitted facilities and activities in Natural Forest Areas include: interpretive trails, hiking trails, cross-country ski trails, off-trail hiking, off-trail cross-country skiing (i.e., Nordic skiing) and snowshoeing (see Appendix 2). These permitted facilities and activities require agency design review but do not require additional Commission approval within the land classification and can be undertaken provided they comply with local, state and federal regulations.

Conditional use facilities can be further conditioned within the land classification and then can be undertaken provided they comply with local, state and federal regulations. Examples of conditional use facilities in Natural Forest Area include interpretive kiosks, composting and vault toilets, and paved non-motorized trails.

Conditional use activities can be further conditioned and require specific Commission concurrence within the land classification and then can be undertaken provided they comply with local, state and federal regulations. Examples of conditional use activities in Natural Forest Areas include filming/special events and technical rock climbing.

In 1992/93, the Washington Natural Heritage Program (WNHP) inventoried forests statewide to identify those eligible for classification as Natural Forest Area and Natural Area Preserve. The WNHP determined that the area referred to as the PASEA has considerable natural resource value and is eligible for classification as a Natural Forest Area (Washington Department of Natural Resources 1992).

The Natural Forest Area classification proposed in this option would limit development and promote use in the PASEA for preservation, interpretation and enjoyment of natural processes. As per the Commission's land classification system (WAC 352-16 and Appendix 2), the principal function of this area would be to "assist in maintaining the state's bio-diversity while expanding human understanding and appreciation of natural values."

2.3 ALTERNATIVE 3 - RESOURCE RECREATION AND NATURAL FOREST AREA

This alternative would classify the approximately 630 acres of area within the PASEA including and above the Chair 4 Road as Resource Recreation and the approximately 170 acres below the Chair 4 Road as Natural Forest Area (see Figure II-3 and Table II-1). Within the Resource Recreation area, alpine backcountry skiing would be allowed as a conditional use, but no lift or formal ski trails would be allowed to be constructed. Essentially, Alternative 3 would conditionally allow for the continued use of the PASEA for backcountry skiing as in Alternative 1 – No Action. Some clearing of downed, tipped, or damaged trees could be allowed to reduce hazards for backcountry skiers, improve access for search and rescue, and otherwise enhance the backcountry skiing experience. Snowmobiling, mountain bike and equestrian trails could be allowed within the Resource Recreation designation. This option preserves the current use of the PASEA for undeveloped alpine skiing while affording natural resource protection by classifying the area as a mix of Resource Recreation and Natural Forest Area.

Areas classified as Resource Recreation are suited and/or developed for natural and/or cultural resource-based medium-intensity and low-intensity outdoor recreational use. Examples of permitted facilities and activities in Resource Recreation Areas include primitive camping, interpretive trails and kiosks, hiking trails, cross-country ski trails, technical rock climbing, off-trail hiking, off-trail snowmobiling, off-trail cross-country skiing and snowshoeing (see Appendix 2).

Conditional use facilities can be further conditioned within the land classification and then can be undertaken provided they comply with local, state and federal regulations. Examples of conditional use facilities in Resource Recreation Areas include horse-oriented camping, equestrian facilities, alpine ski facilities, equestrian trails, mountain biking trails, snowmobile trails and paved non-motorized trails. Although alpine ski facilities may be permitted conditionally within the Resource Recreation classification, in this alternative alpine ski facilities would not be an allowed conditional use in the area of the PASEA contemplated for designation as Resource Recreation; only backcountry alpine skiing as an activity would be allowed.

Conditional use activities can be further conditioned and require specific Commission concurrence within the land classification and then can be undertaken provided they comply with local, state and federal regulations. Examples of conditional use activities in Resource Recreation Areas include alpine skiing, off-trail equestrian use, off-trail biking and mushing/sled dogs.

2.4 ALTERNATIVE 4 - RECREATION, RESOURCE RECREATION, AND NATURAL FOREST AREA

This alternative includes three land classifications within the PASEA, the reclassification of approximately 20 acres adjacent to the PASEA as well approximately 1 acre of Heritage adjacent to the Vista House (see Figure II-4 and Table II-1):

- A Recreation classification in the 279-acre area where MS 2000 has proposed expanding its
 developed ski area.⁵ This area includes approximately 20 acres of land adjacent to the PASEA
 that is currently classified as Resource Recreation that would be reclassified as Recreation, as
 well as approximately 1 acre of Heritage adjacent to the Vista House that would be reclassified as
 Recreation. A detailed discussion of the potential impacts related to the developed ski area is
 included in Section III of this combined EIS document;
- A Resource Recreation classification that conditionally permits alpine "backcountry" skiing in an approximately 300-acre area that buffers the developed ski area and provides management direction for existing facilities within the PASEA (e.g., Chair 4 Road); and
- A Natural Forest Area classification in the approximately 170-acre area below the Chair 4 Road.

Table II-1: Comparison of Alternatives*

Comparison of finering Co				
Land Classification	Alternative 1 No-Action (acres)	Alternative 2 (acres)	Alternative 3 (acres)	Alternative 4 (acres)
Natural Forest Area	0	705	170	170
Resource Recreation	0	95	630	300
Recreation	0	0	0	330
Recreation – Reclassification of Resource Recreation Land Adjacent to the PASEA**	0	0	0	20
Recreation – Reclassification of Heritage Land Adjacent to the PASEA**				<1

^{*} See Section I, footnote 1. Acreage numbers in this table are approximate.

Within the area designated as Recreation, a ski lift and alpine ski trail pod could be permitted. Similar to the operation and maintenance of the current ski area which is classified as Recreation, more vegetation

^{**} This reclassification of lands is only contemplated by Alternative 4.

⁵ Commission direction regarding the management of natural resources within areas classified as "*Recreation*" is discussed in *Commission Policy 73-04-1 Protecting Washington State Parks Natural Resources*. Subsection A(1) states that "State Parks will maintain native plants and animals (biodiversity) that occur, or seek to re-establish them where they historically occurred, within those park lands classified by the Commission as Resource Recreation Areas, Natural Areas, Natural Forest Areas, or Natural Area Preserves. When consistent with recreational use, cultural resources integrity, and other agency objectives, native plants and animals will also be preserved in lands classified as Recreation and Heritage Areas."

could be cleared within the area designated Recreation. The area designated as Resource Recreation would offer a higher level of resource conservation due to the forest management practices required in that classification. The area below the Chair 4 Road is not being considered for alpine skiing due to habitat and terrain and would be classified as Natural Forest Area.

Areas classified as Recreation are suited and/or developed for high-intensity outdoor recreational use, conference, cultural and/or educational centers, or other uses serving large numbers of people. Permitted facilities and activities require agency design review but do not require additional Commission approval within the land classification and can be undertaken provided they comply with local, state and federal regulations. Examples of permitted facilities and activities in Recreation Areas include camping, day use picnic areas, informal play fields, snowmobile trails, mountain bike trails, cross-country ski trails, technical rock climbing, off-trail snowmobiling, off-trail cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

Conditional use facilities can be further conditioned within the land classification and then can be undertaken provided they comply with local, state and federal regulations. Examples of conditional use facilities in Recreation Areas include horse-oriented camping, environmental learning centers, equestrian facilities, alpine ski facilities and equestrian trails.

Conditional use activities can be further conditioned and require specific Commission concurrence within the land classification and then can be undertaken provided they comply with local, state and federal regulations. Examples of conditional use activities in Recreation Areas include alpine skiing, off-trail equestrian use, off-trail biking and mushing/sled dogs. Under this alternative, alpine ski facilities and the activity of alpine skiing would be permitted within the Recreation classification.

2.5 MITIGATION MEASURES

Mitigation is intended to avoid completely or to minimize the potential environmental impacts related to the action alternatives that are proposed. Although this proposal is a non-project action that does not include site-specific development, the general mitigation measures below are provided for any future trail and facility development regardless of land classification. In addition to these mitigation measures, any conditions of approval from Spokane County and other jurisdictional agencies (e.g., Washington Department of Ecology, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, federal government) would be applied. For purposes of this analysis the definition of mitigation under SEPA can be found in WAC 197-11-768 where:

- "Mitigation" means:
- (1) Avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action;
- (2) Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation, by using appropriate technology, or by taking affirmative steps to avoid or reduce impacts;
- (3) Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment;
- (4) Reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations

during the life of the action;

- (5) Compensating for the impact by replacing, enhancing, or providing substitute resources or environments; and/or
- (6) Monitoring the impact and taking appropriate corrective measures.

2.5.1 General Mitigation Measures

- 1. Compliance with applicable provisions of the Spokane County Critical Areas Ordinance.
- 2. Compliance with the Clearing and Grading provisions of Spokane County Code.
- 3. Compliance with any Department of Fish and Wildlife Hydraulic Project Approval requirements.
- 4. Compliance with Department of Ecology General Stormwater Permit and National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit requirements.
- 5. Compliance with Department of Natural Resources Forest Practices Permit requirements.
- 6. Application of Best Management Practices (BMPs) and use of Forest Service or International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) trail standards for trail and trail facility construction.
- 7. Establishment of temporary erosion sediment control measures prior to any site work and installation of surface water controls to intercept all surface water from disturbed areas.
- 8. Using preventive measures to minimize wind transport of soil when sediment transported by wind is likely to be deposited in water resources.
- 9. Conducting earthwork during drier periods to the degree possible.
- 10. Re-establishment of vegetation as soon as construction is completed.
- 11. Stabilization of the entrance to construction areas with quarry spalls.
- 12. Covering trucks transporting soil materials.
- 13. Avoiding the concentration of runoff in ways that negatively impact the surrounding area or streams.
- 14. Covering stockpiled soil materials.
- 15. When practical, using any leftover organic debris on-site.
- 16. Minimizing vegetation disturbance and clearly delineating areas to be cleared to avoid unnecessary vegetation disturbance during construction.
- 17. Hardening trails and trailheads with soil protection measures (examples include gravel, culverts, grass plantings, mulch).
- 18. Using certified weed-free native or non-invasive vegetation on trailheads and in heavily disturbed areas where it is necessary to re-vegetate.

- 19. Delineating trails clearly to minimize use of off-trail sensitive areas.
- 20. To the degree practical, retaining woody debris and organic detritus on the site.
- 21. Using increased opportunities for education and nature awareness through interpretation and interpretive signing.

2.5.2 Mitigation Measures Specific to Invasive Species

- 1. Minimize soil disturbance.
- 2. Minimize canopy removal.
- 3. Where possible, use mowing and brush trimming to maintain trail widths, and avoid unnecessary digging that disturbs soils and can create new habitats for weeds.
- 4. Limit vehicles to existing roads, parking lots, and travel routes where they are allowed.
- 5. To the degree practical, obtain fill material on-site from weed-free project cuts.
- 6. Require all equipment to be thoroughly cleaned before being used on the site.
- 7. Specify certified weed-free native or non-invasive vegetation for reseeding.
- 8. Regularly monitor all trails to identify non-native and invasive species before they become established.
- 9. Control Class A and Class B (and regulated Class C) noxious weeds before seeds mature. Replant denuded areas with certified noxious-weed free seed.

2.5.3 Mitigation Measures Specific to Trail Construction

- 1. To the degree practical, minimize impacts to potential breeding bird populations by restricting construction activities during the breeding-nesting season from April 1 to July 15.
- 2. To the degree practical, minimize impacts to potential breeding and young-rearing mammal populations by restricting construction activities during the breeding season from March 1 through July 15.
- 3. During construction, enforce measures to ensure that trash or refuse associated with construction is minimized.
- 4. Install and maintain mufflers and sound attenuation devices on all equipment and vehicles in order to minimize construction noise impacts.
- 5. Clearly mark construction clearing limits and trail routes to ensure that habitat alteration is minimized during construction.
- 6. To the degree practical, retain important standing wildlife habitat by minimizing the falling of large or mature snags.

- 7. Retain standing snags and dying trees (of any size class) whenever possible, acknowledging the need to remove hazard trees and minimize fire danger.
- 8. To the degree practical, retain small diameter snags in clusters.
- 9. To the degree practical, retain snags adjacent to live green trees.
- 10. To the degree practical, retain important coarse woody debris in the form of downed logs greater than 6 inches diameter and with a length of 8 or more feet.
- 11. To the degree practical, retain patches of jackstrawed logs supported greater than 2 feet above ground by other logs while considering increased fire potential through ladder fuels.
- 12. Provide public education and interpretive opportunities to enhance the visitor's experience while helping to limit their impact on wildlife.

2.5.4 Mitigation Measures Specific to Trail Use

- 1. Consider seasonality of trail use to reduce stress on wildlife during nesting/denning, young-rearing, and winter and early spring foraging seasons in areas where there are high seasonal wildlife concentrations.
- 2. To the degree practical, maintain coarse woody debris (i.e., logs and downed wood) within the forest by routing trails through natural forest openings and non-vegetated areas.

2.6 PERMITS AND APPROVALS REQUIRED FOR IMPLEMENTATION

No permits or approvals beyond consideration by the Commission are required for the nonproject action of land classification/reclassification. Implementation of future recreational facility development consistent with the *Land Classification Compatibility Matrix for Facilities and Activities* (see Appendix 2) may require permits from Spokane County, Washington State, and/or the federal government. For the permits and approvals required for ski area expansion see Section III, section 2.5 – List of Permits and Approvals Required for Implementation of either of the action alternatives contemplated by Section III.

3. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

3.1 SOILS AND GEOLOGY

3.1.1 Affected Environment

The topography of the PASEA extends from approximately 5,800 feet elevation near the summit of Mount Spokane to an elevation of approximately 4,400 feet near Chair 4 Road. Slope gradients vary from approximately 40 to 60 percent on higher elevation areas to relatively flat (less than 5 percent) in benched areas. According to the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Soils Resource Report most soils in the park, including the PASEA, have a severe to extreme erosion hazard. This classification is

primarily due to the parent soil material being comprised of crystalline granitic bedrock. Past field surveys revealed no signs of major soil erosion or landslides, primarily due to the undisturbed condition of the PASEA.

3.1.2 Environmental Consequences

3.1.2.1 Alternative 1 - No Action

The No Action Alternative provides a baseline for comparing the effects of the action alternatives. The No Action Alternative reflects a continuation of existing management practices without applying a land classification.

3.1.2.2 Alternative 2 – Natural Forest Area

Under this alternative, there would be less opportunity for potential impacts to soil and geology resources due to the more limited range of uses that would be allowed to occur. Under this alternative, more intensive uses such as alpine ski facilities would not be a permitted use. Impacts would be limited to those facilities and activities currently existing in the PASEA. This alternative would provide the least potential for soil and geology impacts and would be as described in Alternative 1 – No Action.

3.1.2.3 Alternative 3 – Resource Recreation and Natural Forest Area

Implementation of this alternative would allow for a range of recreational uses consistent with those detailed in the *Land Classification Compatibility Matrix for Facilities and Activities* (see Appendix 2) with the exception of alpine ski facilities, which would not be a permitted facility use in the Resource Recreation classification. In general, trail based recreation and recreational facilities have the potential to negatively impact soils and geology if they are not constructed in a manner that is sensitive to the landscape.

3.1.2.4 Alternative 4 - Recreation, Resource Recreation, and Natural Forest Area

Under this alternative, there would be greater opportunity for potential impacts to soil and geology resources due to the expanded range of uses that would be allowed to occur in the Recreation classification. Under this alternative, more intensive uses such as alpine ski facilities would be a permitted use. Construction and operation of facilities such as recreational trails, ski runs and lift towers have the potential to negatively impact soils and geology (see Section III, section 3.1 – Soils and Geology for a detailed analysis of the potential impacts associated with construction and operation of alpine ski facilities).

3.1.3 Mitigation Measures

Potential environmental impacts of the action alternatives would be minimized through implementation of the mitigation measures described in section 2.5 above, through project specific permitting, and through agency-prepared operational plans.

3.1.4 Cumulative Effects

Cumulative effects are the impacts that may result from the incremental impact of an action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Generally, an impact can be considered cumulative if: a) effects of several actions occur in the same locale; b) effects on a particular resource are similar in nature; and c) effects are long-term in nature.

Past development in portions of the PASEA has resulted in limited tree removal, grading, and installation of developed facilities. Cumulatively, past construction on lands within and in the vicinity of the PASEA include the construction of Chair 4 Road, the Vista House, the Summit Road, existing ski area facilities at the summit of Mount Spokane and communication towers. These existing facilities have changed sediment yield, soil compaction and impermeable surfaces between pre-development conditions and present day recreational area development. Changes in sediment yield and soil compaction are primarily temporary and associated with construction activities; however, permanent developments such as trails, roads, buildings, and structures would continue to result in an increase of impermeable surfaces over pre-development conditions.

3.2 WATERSHED RESOURCES

3.2.1 Affected Environment

The PASEA encompasses portions of Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 57 – Middle Spokane River. The annual precipitation in WRIA 57 ranges from approximately 15 inches per year in the lower elevations of the basins to over 45 inches in the mountainous parts of the basins. About 70 percent of the precipitation occurs during the months of October through March. Approximately 25–40 percent of the precipitation falls as snow, depending on elevation. Accumulations of snow range from a few inches to several feet at the Spokane National Weather Service Station. Mount Spokane is a critical component of the hydrologic cycle in the greater Spokane/Coeur d'Alene area. The mountain serves an important role of storing water that falls as snow in winter, and recharging groundwater throughout the spring and summer months.

3.2.1.1 Streams

The streams located in the PASEA flow into Blanchard Creek and eventually the Middle Spokane River watershed. The primary source of hydrology to ephemeral (seasonal) and perennial (year-round) stream channels within the PASEA is runoff from snow melt and seasonal storm events. Multiple unnamed ephemeral and perennial streams occur within the PASEA. None of these streams are fish bearing although they do contribute to the overall health of downstream fish bearing waters. A wetland and stream delineation was performed on the 279-acre ski expansion area, the results of which are included in Appendix D (Section III) and are graphically displayed in Section III, Figure EIS-14: Existing Conditions – Watershed.

3.2.1.2 Wetlands

There are multiple, small wetlands located within the PASEA. Due to the steep topography associated with the PASEA, these wetlands are typically sloped wetlands or wetlands associated with the initiation points of ephemeral and perennial drainages.

3.2.1.3 Water Quality

No water quality monitoring stations occur within the PASEA or within Mount Spokane State Park. The main source of potential water quality degradation within the PASEA is vehicular traffic on existing roads during the summer, as visitors to the Vista House travel to the summit of Mount Spokane. Vehicular traffic has the potential to pollute surface waters in the PASEA as oil and tire particles may be washed from the Summit Road into nearby drainages. Activities that are most likely to indirectly impact water quality within the PASEA are those that may occur within wetland or stream buffers such as any necessary clearing of riparian vegetation for recreational trails and facilities. Potential indirect impacts to water quality include the following:

- Increased sediment yield to streams and wetlands from clearing and grading,
- Increased pollutant runoff from construction equipment into streams and wetlands, and
- Increased water temperatures resulting from the removal of riparian vegetation and subsequent increases in solar radiation.

3.2.2 Environmental Consequences

3.2.2.1 Alternative 1 – No Action

The No Action Alternative provides a baseline for comparing the effects of the action alternatives. The No Action Alternative reflects a continuation of existing management practices without applying a land classification.

3.2.2.2 Alternative 2 – Natural Forest Area

Under Alternative 2, there would be less opportunity for potential impacts to streams, wetlands and water quality due to the more limited range of uses that would be allowed to occur. Under this alternative, more intensive uses such as alpine ski facilities would not be a permitted use. This alternative would provide the least potential for stream, wetland and water quality impacts of all the action alternatives and would be similar to Alternative 1.

3.2.2.3 Alternative 3 – Resource Recreation and Natural Forest Area

Implementation of Alternative 3 would allow for a range of recreational uses consistent with those detailed in the *Land Classification Compatibility Matrix for Facilities and Activities* (see Appendix 2) with the exception of alpine ski facilities, which would not be a permitted facility use in the Resource Recreation classification. In general, trail based recreation and recreational facilities have the potential to negatively impact streams, wetlands, and water quality if they are not constructed in a manner that is sensitive to the landscape.

3.2.2.4 Alternative 4 - Recreation, Resource Recreation, and Natural Forest Area

Under Alternative 4, there would be greater opportunity for potential impacts to streams, wetlands and water quality due to the expanded range of uses that would be allowed to occur in the Recreation classification. Under this alternative, more intensive uses, such as alpine ski facilities, would be permitted. Construction and operation of facilities, such as recreational trails, cleared ski runs and lift towers, have the potential to negatively impact streams, wetlands and water quality (see Section III, section 3.2 – Watershed Resources for a detailed analysis of the potential impacts associated with construction and operation of alpine ski facilities).

3.2.3 Mitigation Measures

Potential environmental impacts of the action alternatives would be minimized through implementation of the mitigation measures described in section 2.5 above, through project specific permitting, and through agency-prepared operational plans.

3.2.4 Cumulative Effects

Under Alternatives 3 and 4, future projects and construction activities occurring within wetlands and streams have the potential to alter plant communities and functional processes of the riparian zone. These processes include sediment filtration, stream bank stabilization, floodwater storage (duration and timing of flow), large woody debris (LWD) recruitment, and stream channel shading. Conversion of forest to meadow is also likely to alter hydrologic functions within the project area (e.g., evapotranspiration reduction, infiltration rates). While wetland and stream buffer widths typically encompass an area greater than the functional riparian zone, construction activities within the buffers occur in closer proximity to watershed resources. Based on this circumstance, there is a higher potential for projects occurring within wetland and stream buffers to impact watershed resources compared to projects occurring outside.

3.3 VEGETATION

3.3.1 Affected Environment

Mount Spokane State Park, including the PASEA, occupies a unique position on the landscape in Spokane County. It has the highest point in the county and has high elevation habitat that is found nowhere else in the local area. Largely due to its isolation and high elevation in relation to the surrounding landscape, Mount Spokane receives a much greater amount of precipitation than the surrounding landscape. Due to the fairly deep soils of the area and the relatively high precipitation, most of Mount Spokane State Park and the PASEA are covered by coniferous forests, with a few scattered meadows, talus fields, shrub fields and riparian deciduous forests. The higher elevations are dominated by subalpine forests while the mid and lower elevations are dominated by montane forests. Forested communities are present in most of the PASEA. However, portions of the PASEA contain shrublands, meadows, areas of tree blow-down and talus. Snowmelt varies by topography and forest cover. No vascular plant species of conservation concern are known to occur within Mount Spokane State Park.

Washington State requires that noxious weeds be controlled to limit adverse effects on agricultural, natural, and human resources of the state. Noxious weeds are non-native, invasive plants that, when established, are highly destructive, competitive, or difficult to control by cultural or chemical means. Due to the relatively undisturbed state of the PASEA, noxious weeds are not common. Scattered individuals of common tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*) have been observed occurring along roadsides within the park. Control of common tansy is not required in Spokane County. Additionally, Parks staff has indicated that orange hawkweed (*Hieracium aurantiacum*) has been observed occurring along the Chair 4 Road. Orange hawkweed is a Class B weed, and control is mandated by Spokane County

Although land classification itself will not impact existing vegetative communities, construction and operation of recreational facilities and uses permitted consistent with the *Land Classification Compatibility Matrix for Facilities and Activities* (see Appendix 2) have the potential to impact vegetative communities and forested stands within the PASEA. Generally, recreational trail impacts can be assessed based on the proposed types of use and required construction methods for each use. Activities that could occur based on land classification include, but are not limited to, alpine skiing, hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, and backcountry skiing.

The recreational use typically dictates the width and type of clearing associated with each trail. Mountain bike, hiking, cross country ski and snowshoe trails require a 1- to 2-foot trail width, with a 1- to 2-foot off-trail maintenance area alongside the trail. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible trails typically require a 5- to 6-foot wide trail width. Equestrian trails require trail size and maintenance widths similar to hiking trails; however, they may be larger due to the size of the animals using the trails, especially in forested areas. Snowmobile trails require a 10- to 12-foot wide trail, with an additional 2 feet for off-trail maintenance. Alpine ski trails typically require a wider trail footprint that can vary between 60 and 190 feet.

Potential impacts from trail construction, trail use or ongoing maintenance include the following:

- impacts to plants and their habitats;
- direct harm to plants providing ecosystem services;
- loss or alteration of plant habitats;
- altered ecosystem function;
- increased spread of invasive species;
- displacement of native plants by non-natives;
- increased soil disturbance favoring invasive species establishment;
- soil compaction and associated changes in hydrology and plant growth;
- human, pet and wildlife travel leading to the spread of invasive species;

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- changed vegetation community composition or function;
- changes in animal browsing patterns or trampling of vegetation; and
- increased risk of wildfire.

Impacts to non-listed plants and plant communities can occur as a result of trail construction, maintenance and use. Vegetation removal affects plant communities by changing the availability of water, nutrients and sunlight, while selectively removing existing individuals and the habitat they provide. In addition to direct effects to live vegetation, trail construction activities involve indirect effects such as cutting trees and roots out of the path of the trail, digging soil to provide a hard and level graded surface, and allowing for drainage of rain and snowmelt. Trail construction and maintenance may also involve planting, seeding and weed control activities that can impact the community plant composition. Trail-based recreation and trail construction and maintenance can alter soil characteristics, which affects the germination, establishment, growth, and reproduction of plants. Altered soil characteristics include compaction, which can reduce successful germination. Loss or disturbance of organic soil horizons can disrupt ecosystems through impaired decomposition, nutrient cycling, oxygen exchange and water availability.

3.3.2 Environmental Consequences

3.3.2.1 Alternative 1 - No Action

The No Action Alternative provides a baseline for comparing the effects of the action alternatives. The No Action Alternative reflects a continuation of existing management practices without applying a land classification.

3.3.2.2 Alternative 2 – Natural Forest Area

Under Alternative 2, there would be less opportunity for potential impacts to vegetative communities and forested stands due to the more limited range of uses that would be allowed to occur. Existing activities and facilities including Chair 4 Road, the Summit Road and mountain bike trail #140 would continue to be maintained. Under this alternative more intensive uses such as alpine ski facilities would not be a permitted use. This alternative would provide the least potential for impacts to vegetative communities and forested stands of all the action alternatives and would be similar to Alternative 1.

3.3.2.3 Alternative 3 – Resource Recreation and Natural Forest Area

With the exception of alpine ski facilities, which would not be a permitted facility use in the Resource Recreation classification, implementation of Alternative 3 would allow for a range of recreational uses consistent with those detailed in the *Land Classification Compatibility Matrix for Facilities and Activities* (see Appendix 2). In general, trail-based recreation and recreational facilities have the potential to negatively impact vegetative communities and forested stands as discussed above if they are not constructed in a manner that is sensitive to the landscape.

3.3.2.4 Alternative 4 – Recreation, Resource Recreation, and Natural Forest Area

Under Alternative 4, there would be greater opportunity for potential impacts to vegetative communities and forested stands due to the expanded range of uses that would be allowed to occur in the Recreation classification. Under this alternative, more intensive uses, such as alpine ski facilities, would be permitted. Construction and operation of facilities, such as recreational trails, cleared ski runs and lift towers, have the potential to negatively impact vegetative communities and forested stands (see Section III, section 3.3 – Vegetation for a detailed analysis of the potential impacts associated with construction and operation of alpine ski facilities).

3.3.3 Mitigation Measures

Potential environmental impacts of the action alternatives would be minimized through implementation of the mitigation measures described in section 2.5 above, through project specific permitting, and through agency-prepared operational plans.

3.3.4 Cumulative Effects

Under Alternatives 3 and 4, cumulative impacts to vegetation due to potential future recreational trail and facility development include alterations in snowpack and snowmelt due to a change in vegetation communities present in portions of the PASEA and corresponding alterations on the vegetation growing season due to increased sunlight and longer snow retention in cleared areas (see Section III, section 3.3 – Vegetation for a detailed analysis of the potential impacts associated with construction and operation of alpine ski facilities).

3.4 WILDLIFE

3.4.1 Affected Environment

Mount Spokane is home to a diversity of wildlife species. Coyote, deer, moose, elk, black bear, western toads, owls, small mammals, bats, butterflies, and a diversity of bird species all occur, or have the potential to occur within the PASEA. In consultation with WDFW, State Parks has prioritized twenty-one focal wildlife species, which potentially occur at Mount Spokane State Park and within the PASEA. These include game and non-game species from a wide range of taxa, which use a wide range of environments, including mature forests, talus slopes, recent burns, meadows, and alpine, subalpine, riparian and aquatic habitats. A detailed description of each of the twenty-one focal species, their potential distribution in the park, important habitat elements and their associated lifestage relationship can be reviewed in the document titled *Habitat Elements and Life Stage Matrix for Wildlife Species of Interest in Mount Spokane State Park*, as noted in Appendix 4.

Suitable habitat conditions within the PASEA currently exist for the various life stages of all twenty-one focal wildlife species. These wildlife species are listed in the table below. The identified wildlife species have the potential to occur within the PASEA during their various life stages.

Table II-2: Twenty-one Focal Wildlife Species of Mount Spokane State Park

Species	Scientific Name	WDFW Species of Concern	Federal Status		
CARNIVORES	<u> </u>		<u> </u>		
1 Gray wolf	Canis lupus	State Endangered	None		
2 Canadian lynx	Lynx Canadensis	State Threatened	Federal Threatened		
3 Wolverine	Gulo gulo	State Candidate	Federal Candidate Species		
4 American marten	Martes Americana	None	None		
UNGULATES					
5 Rocky Mountain elk	Cervus elaphus	None	None		
6 White-tailed deer	Odocoileus virginianus ochrourus	None	None		
7 Moose	Alces alces	None	None		
BIRDS					
8 Northern goshawk	Accipiter gentilis	State Candidate	Federal Species of Concern		
9 Boreal owl	Aegolius funereus richardoni	State Monitor	None		
10 Pileated woodpecker	Dryocopus pileatus	State Candidate	None		
11 Black-backed woodpecker	Picoides arcticus	State Candidate	None		
12 Dusky grouse	Dendragapus obscurus pallidus	None	None		
13 Brown creeper	Certhia Americana	None	None		
14 Winter wren	Troglodytes troglodytes	None	None		
15 Olive-sided flycatcher	Contopus cooperi	None	None		
SMALL MAMMALS	SMALL MAMMALS				
16 Pika	Ochotona princeps	None	None		
17 Pygmy shrew	Sorex hoyi	State Monitor	None		
18 Silver-haired bat	Lasionycteris noctivagans	None	None		
19 Hoary bat	Lasiurus cinereus	None	None		
OTHER SPECIES					
20 Western toad	Bufo boreas	State Candidate	Federal Species of Concern		
21 Compton tortoiseshell butterfly	Nymphalis vaualbum	State Monitor	None		

There are a wide variety of impacts from recreation on the twenty-one species of interest. Potential impact types by mode of recreation for the twenty-one focal wildlife species is provided in detail in *Recreation and Trail Impacts on Wildlife Species of Interest in Mount Spokane State Park*, as noted in Appendix 3. These impacts are summarized below:

<u>Hiking/Backpacking</u> – Hikers may affect wildlife through direct disturbance, trampling of habitat, and indirectly through discarded food and other items. Some species are particularly sensitive to the approach of humans on foot. Hikers/backpackers can inadvertently lead to the spread of noxious weeds and reduction of habitat quality for some species.

<u>Horseback riding</u> – Horseback riding appears to be on the lower end of the spectrum in causing direct disturbance to wildlife. Indirectly, this activity may contribute to the spread of noxious weeds in wildlife habitats. Concentrations of horses around water can negatively impact habitat quality for aquatic wildlife. Horses can attract brown-headed cowbirds and potential predators of some songbirds, particularly where corrals and stables are present.

Mountain Biking – Mountain biking is often assumed to be more disturbing to wildlife than hiking. Speed and sound-levels of bikers vary from those of hikers and skiers, affecting wildlife responses. Mountain biking may seem less predictable to wildlife due to generally less talking, quicker actions, and greater disruption during an encounter. However, animals react most to the human form, and mountain bikers, like vehicles, may seem less threatening and predictable since they are limited to trail corridors. Mountain bikers may contribute to the spread of noxious weeds, thus reducing or increasing forage habitat for a variety of wildlife species.

<u>Skiing</u> – This category includes cross-country skiing as well as telemark, backcountry skiing, and alpine skiing/snowboarding. Skiing is often concentrated on trails but may unpredictably occur away from trails as well as in the form of backcountry skiing. Some wildlife appears more sensitive to the approach of humans on foot/skis than on motorized vehicles. Groomed trails are also used as travel corridors by generalist carnivores, allowing some species to range into formerly snowbound or difficult to reach areas.

Snowmobiles – Technological advances are increasing the type of terrain that snowmobiles can access, opening up previously undisturbed winter habitats that serve a variety of wildlife species. Noise, unpredictability, speed, and snow compaction associated with snowmobiles are variables that can impact wildlife. Irresponsible and illegal snowmobile use is associated with harassment of wildlife, increasing susceptibility to physiological effects on wildlife species. Snowmobile use occurs in winter when many species may already be stressed by thermal regulation and food shortages. Packed or groomed roads and trails are used as travel corridors by generalist carnivores, allowing some species to range into formerly snowbound or difficult to reach areas. Impacts of snowmobile activity using maintained roads and trails is less than that of snowmobiles using off-road routes.

The following potential impacts to wildlife from recreational uses may occur:

<u>Trapping/poaching</u> – Although trapping is not allowed in Washington State Parks, illegal trapping and hunting are cited as risks associated with trails (particularly snowmobile trails).

<u>Stress/physiological response</u> – Studies of animal heart rates and fecal glucocorticoid levels have shown stress responses to human activity. Chronic stress can make species susceptible to illness and reduce individual fitness.

<u>Breeding/rearing disturbance</u> – Species that are considered generally tolerant of human activity may experience higher levels of disturbance at breeding and rearing sites. This may result in reduced

attentiveness to young, disruption of feeding patterns, abandonment of nests and dens, and cause adults to undertake additional risks to their young by moving them to a new location.

<u>Displacement/avoidance</u> – Many species often move away from human activity or intentionally avoid associated sites. Sites may be avoided due to the disruption caused by human presence or habitat changes associated with the site (e.g., soil compaction, dryness of soils and vegetation along roadsides and trails). Animals displaced are less likely to survive and reproduce where habitat is unfamiliar or inferior. Displacement or avoidance is by far the most common response found in the literature related to recreation facilities and activities.

<u>Disease</u> – Domestic dogs are allowed in Washington State Parks and, although regulations specify that they should be restrained at all times, there are potentially dog owners who do not abide by this rule. Domestic dogs can transmit diseases such as rabies, distemper, and parasites to a variety of wildlife species.

<u>Animal collection</u> – Although relatively uncommon, certain species (e.g., goshawk chicks for falconry) are sometimes illegally collected. Trail access can increase vulnerability.

<u>Habitat fragmentation/edge effects</u> – Habitat fragmentation/edge effects are often associated with timber harvest and/or roads, however recreational trails can have similar, though typically less intense impacts. Edge effects refer to habitat impacts to lands immediately adjacent to cleared trails and roads. However, fragmenting effects are not limited to wide road corridors and power lines. Narrow corridors associated with smaller roads and nature trails may have similar impacts. Forest fragmentation effects on songbirds mainly include nest parasitism and presence of nest predators (such as brown-headed cowbirds) in the trail corridor and adjacent interior forest. It has been noted that predation of songbird nests was greater closer to forested hiking trails. Another study found bird composition and abundance of songbirds was altered adjacent to trails.

<u>Predator/competitor increased accessibility</u> – Winter trails and snowmobile trails in particular, can greatly ease travel and access for species less adapted for movement in deep snows. This may cause greater rates of predation on some species and increased competition for prey for other species. Domestic animals (which may include livestock, cats and dogs) may be considered a competitor or predator species, especially near the periphery of Mount Spokane State Park where domestic livestock and pets are commonly found.

<u>Snag/coarse woody debris reduction</u> – Snags and coarse woody debris are used for cover, nesting and denning, and are key habitat components for some species. These components may be lost through trail development, wood gathering around campsites, recreational site development and associated removal of "hazard" trees.

<u>Incidental mortality</u> – Direct collision with motorized vehicles can result in incidental mortality. During winter months, snowmobiles may indirectly cause mortality of small mammals by compacting snow and collapsing subnivian tunnels. During summer months, off-trail hiking and equestrian use can cause indirect mortality of small mammal broods by caving in denning sites.

<u>Habituation</u> – Many species will become habituated to human presence. Habituation often poses risks to animals, resulting in undesirable behaviors, poor nutrition, incidental destruction of property, and a host of other factors.

3.4.2 Environmental Consequences

3.4.2.1 Alternative 1 - No Action

The No Action Alternative provides a baseline for comparing the effects of the action alternatives. The No Action Alternative reflects a continuation of existing management practices without applying a land classification.

3.4.2.2 Alternative 2 – Natural Forest Area

Under Alternative 2, there would be less opportunity for potential impacts to wildlife due to the more limited range of uses that would be allowed to occur. Under this alternative, more intensive uses such as alpine ski facilities would not be a permitted use. This alternative would provide the least potential for wildlife impacts of all the action alternatives and would be similar to Alternative 1, with the exception that potential wildlife disturbance from backcountry skiing would not occur.

3.4.2.3 Alternative 3 – Resource Recreation and Natural Forest Area

Implementation of Alternative 3 would allow for a range of recreational uses consistent with those detailed in the *Land Classification Compatibility Matrix for Facilities and Activities* (see Appendix 2) with the exception of alpine ski facilities, which would not be a permitted facility use in the Resource Recreation classification. As discussed above, trail based recreation and recreational facilities have the potential to negatively impact wildlife.

3.4.2.4 Alternative 4 – Recreation, Resource Recreation, and Natural Forest Area

Under Alternative 4, there would be greater opportunity for potential impacts to wildlife due to the expanded range of uses that would be allowed to occur in the Recreation classification. Under this alternative, more intensive uses, such as alpine ski facilities, would be permitted. Construction and operation of facilities, such as recreational trails, cleared ski runs and lift towers, have the potential to negatively impact wildlife (see Section III, section 3.4 – Wildlife for a detailed analysis of the potential impacts associated with construction and operation of alpine ski facilities).

3.4.3 Mitigation Measures

Potential environmental impacts of the action alternatives would be minimized through implementation of the mitigation measures described in section 2.5 above, through project specific permitting, and through agency prepared operational plans.

3.4.4 Cumulative Effects

Potential cumulative effects are discussed in this section. Depending upon the degree of trail development and use patterns, new trails through forests and meadows that do not currently have trail use may result in displacement/avoidance behavior by wildlife. Many species often move away from human activity or they intentionally avoid associated human recreation sites. Animals that have been displaced by recreation are less likely to survive and reproduce where habitat is unfamiliar or inferior. In particular, during breeding, rearing, and winter and early spring foraging seasons; stress on wildlife is likely to increase susceptibility to illness, predation, and reduce individual fitness.

3.5 VISUAL RESOURCES

3.5.1 Affected Environment

Mount Spokane is prominent from many vantages within Spokane County. The mountain's prominence has increased its importance as a cultural and regional landmark. Large land clearing activities, and any activity that would add light to the mountain landscape, have the potential to negatively impact views of and from the mountain. A primary viewing site is the summit of Mount Spokane at a location generally referred to as Vista House. Visual impacts from this site are a key measure. Other areas within the park share a scenic resource predominantly defined by the forested environment and normal recreational amenities. Developed facilities such as roadways and cleared ski runs stand in contrast to the forested environment.

3.5.2 Environmental Consequences

3.5.2.1 Alternative 1 – No Action

The No Action Alternative provides a baseline for comparing the effects of the action alternatives. The No Action Alternative reflects a continuation of existing management practices without applying a land classification.

3.5.2.2 Alternative 2 – Natural Forest Area

Under Alternative 2, there would be the least opportunity for potential impacts to visual resources due to the more limited range of uses that would be allowed to occur. Under this alternative, more intensive uses such as alpine ski runs would not be a permitted use. Accordingly, the impact to visual resources under Alternative 2 would be similar to Alternative 1.

3.5.2.3 Alternative 3 – Resource Recreation and Natural Forest Area

With the exception of alpine ski facilities, which would not be a permitted facility use in the Resource Recreation classification, implementation of Alternative 3 would allow for a range of recreational uses consistent with those detailed in the *Land Classification Compatibility Matrix for Facilities and Activities* (see Appendix 2). The most likely use of the PASEA would be single track trail-based recreation, which has a lower potential to impact visual resources.

3.5.2.4 Alternative 4 – Recreation, Resource Recreation, and Natural Forest Area

Under Alternative 4 there would be greater opportunity for potential impacts to visual resources due to the expanded range of uses that would be allowed to occur in the Recreation classification. In particular, cleared ski runs, which may occur at widths of 60 to 190 feet, have the potential to impact views of Mount Spokane (see Section III, section 3.5 – Visual Resources for a detailed analysis of the potential impacts associated with construction and operation of alpine ski facilities).

3.5.3 Mitigation Measures

Potential environmental impacts of the action alternatives would be minimized through implementation of the mitigation measures described in section 2.5 above, through project specific permitting, and through agency prepared operational plans.

3.5.4 Cumulative Effects

Although the PASEA is largely undeveloped, the existing ski area and base area have incrementally developed as skiing has gained popularity. Additionally, previous recreational development at Mount Spokane has involved clearing of hiking trails, grading, and construction of lifts, roads (e.g., Summit Road), and buildings (e.g., Vista House). Changes in vegetative patterns and developed facilities are visible from public lands within the park and from private lands outside of the park.

Alternatives 3 and 4 contain elements that have the potential to result in visual impacts, primarily through the clearing and grading necessary for hiking as well as formal ski trails. Under Alternative 4, the formal ski trails and facilities would be visible by visitors accessing the Vista House on the Summit Road during the summer as additional clearing in a relatively forested landscape, as well as from various distant vantage points.

3.6 RECREATION

3.6.1 Affected Environment

Mount Spokane State Park, encompassing a total of approximately 14,000 acres, offers a wide range of recreation opportunities throughout the year. Existing recreational facilities include 85 picnic sites, 3 picnic shelters, a group camping area for 90 people, 8 standard camp sites, parking for approximately1,588 vehicles, 2 horse feeding stations, 2 comfort stations, 16 vault toilets, 50 miles of hiking/equestrian trails, 50 miles of roads, 3 cabins and the historic Vista House. An existing concessionaire, Mount Spokane 2000, operates the Mount Spokane Ski and Snowboard Park within a 1,425-acre developed portion of its 2,233-acre concession area. Within the developed portion of the ski area boundary, MS 2000 currently operates five aerial chairlifts. The lift network at Mount Spokane provides access to 45 named trails on approximately 150 acres of formal ski trails and another 130 acres of tree and open skiing.

The PASEA exists in a relatively undeveloped state. It provides limited recreational facilities that include Chair 4 Road, which is used for snowmobiling, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. During the winter season, the PASEA is primarily utilized by backcountry skiers and snowshoers. Examples of summer use include hiking and mountain bike use on Trail #140 and horseback riding.

3.6.2 Environmental Consequences

3.6.2.1 Alternative 1 – No Action

The No Action Alternative provides a baseline for comparing the effects of the action alternatives. The No Action Alternative reflects a continuation of existing management practices without applying a land classification. Accordingly, under Alternative 1 there would be no change in the recreational uses allowed in the entire PASEA.

3.6.2.2 Alternative 2 – Natural Forest Area

Under Alternative 2, there would be a net loss in recreational opportunities available within the PASEA when compared to any of the other alternatives analyzed due to the more limited range of uses that would be allowed to occur. Unlike Alternatives 1 and 3, under Alternative 2, backcountry skiing would not be a permitted use.

3.6.2.3 Alternative 3 – Resource Recreation and Natural Forest Area

With the exception of alpine ski facilities, which would not be a permitted facility use in the Resource Recreation classification, implementation of Alternative 3 would allow for a range of recreational uses consistent with those detailed in the *Land Classification Compatibility Matrix for Facilities and Activities* (see Appendix 2). The most likely use of the PASEA would be for trail based recreation. Under this alternative, recreation opportunities could potentially increase.

3.6.2.4 Alternative 4 - Recreation, Resource Recreation, and Natural Forest Area

Alternative 4 provides the greatest potential for increased recreational opportunities of all the action alternatives due to the expanded range of uses that would be allowed to occur in the Recreation classification. In particular, developed ski facilities would be permitted under this alternative and these would provide an additional recreation opportunity within the PASEA (see Section III, section 3.6 – Recreation for a detailed analysis of the potential impacts associated with construction and operation of alpine ski facilities).

3.6.3 Mitigation Measures

Potential environmental impacts of the action alternatives would be minimized through implementation of the mitigation measures described in section 2.5 above, through project specific permitting, and through agency prepared operational plans.

3.6.4 Cumulative Effects

Cumulative impacts to recreation are considered for short-term and long-term impacts. The cumulative effect on recreation is a potential increase in the quantity and access to varied recreation opportunities in the PASEA, including, lift served alpine skiing and an increase in lift-served backcountry skiing opportunities. Alternatively, under Alternative 2, the loss of hike-to, backcountry and side-country ski terrain at Mount Spokane would be a cumulative impact to recreation. Additionally, there would be a loss of solitude during the summer as hikers, mountain bikers and other dispersed summer visitors potentially experience new cleared areas in a previously relatively undeveloped area.

3.7 RESOURCES NOT ANALYZED IN DETAIL

3.7.1 Historic, Cultural and Archaeological Resources

3.7.1.1 Affected Environment

Mount Spokane State Park has a long history with Native American, as well as European American peoples in the Spokane area. While the prehistory of the park has not yet been fully established, the mountain has spiritual significance to local tribes. Traditionally, Mount Spokane was used for game hunting and huckleberry gathering, as well as spiritual quests. Mount Spokane's more recent past has been marked by many events that indicate its importance to the community as a notable destination. Mount Spokane's initial development as a park was pursued privately, then by county and state park departments in succession.

The Paradise Camp/Summit Area Cultural Landscape contains sixteen individual buildings, structures, and objects. These features were documented on Historic Property Inventory Forms and submitted to the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) for concurrence on eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in December of 2012. Of these, ten were determined by DAHP to be eligible for listing on the NRHP including the Vista House, the Latrine, Woodshed, and Reservoir at Cook's Camp, CCC Camp Francis Cook, Cook's Auto Road, the Headquarters Building at CCC Camp Cook, the Memorial to Spokane County War Dead, the Boy Scout Memorial, and the View Tubes. Of these eligible resources, only a portion of Cook's Auto Road (i.e., the Summit Road) lies within the PASEA. Others are nearby, and the expansion area alternatives overlap slightly with the cultural landscape boundary as defined in the 2009 Cultural Resources Management Plan (CRMP). The six features determined to be not eligible for the NRHP include the remains of a CCC telephone line, the original Mt. Spokane Lodge remains, the unfinished Beauty Mountain Latrine, the remains of the Caretaker's Residence in the Cook's Cabin area, communications facilities near the summit, and Chair #1.

3.7.1.2 Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1 - No Action

The No Action Alternative provides a baseline for comparing the effects of the action alternatives. The No Action Alternative reflects a continuation of existing management practices without applying a land classification.

Alternative 2 - Natural Forest Area

Under Alternative 2, there would be less opportunity for potential impacts to historic, cultural, and archaeological resources due to the more limited range of uses that would be allowed to occur. Under this alternative, more intensive uses such as alpine ski facilities would not be a permitted use. Of the action alternatives, Alternative 2 would provide the least potential for historic, cultural, and archaeological impacts of all the action alternatives and would be similar to Alternative 1.

Alternative 3 - Resource Recreation and Natural Forest Area

With the exception of alpine ski facilities, which would not be a permitted facility use in the Resource Recreation classification, implementation of Alternative 3 would allow for a range of recreational uses consistent with those detailed in the *Land Classification Compatibility Matrix for Facilities and Activities* (see Appendix 2). In general, trail based recreation and recreational facilities have the potential to negatively impact historic, cultural, and archaeological resources.

Alternative 4 - Recreation, Resource Recreation, and Natural Forest Area

Under Alternative 4, there would be greater opportunity for potential impacts to historic, cultural, and archaeological resources due to the expanded range of uses that would be allowed to occur in the Recreation classification. Under this alternative, more intensive uses such as alpine ski facilities would be a permitted use and would involve more intensive clearing than less developed trails (i.e., single-track trails, horseback, etc.). Construction of facilities, such as recreational trails, ski runs and lift towers, have the potential to negatively impact historic, cultural, and archaeological resources (see Section III, section 3.7.1 – Historic, Cultural, and Archaeological Resources for a detailed analysis of the potential impacts associated with construction and operation of alpine ski facilities).

3.7.1.3 Mitigation Measures

Potential environmental impacts of the action alternatives would be minimized through implementation of the mitigation measures described in section 2.5 above, through project specific permitting and surveys, and through agency-prepared operational plans.

3.7.2 Air Quality

3.7.2.1 Affected Environment

Air quality and visibility within Mount Spokane State Park and the surrounding area follows patterns strongly influenced by weather and topography. Local air quality in the Study Area is primarily affected by emissions from the use of fireplaces, summer dust storms, and motorized vehicles and occasional

nearby wildfires. The use of snowmobiles and high density traffic on high use days affects air quality intermittently.

3.7.2.2 Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1 - No Action

The No Action Alternative provides a baseline for comparing the effects of the action alternatives. The No Action Alternative reflects a continuation of existing management practices without applying a land classification.

Alternative 2 - Natural Forest Area

Under Alternative 2, there would be less opportunity for potential impacts to air quality due to the more limited range of uses that would be allowed to occur. Under this alternative, more intensive uses such as snowmobiling would not be a permitted use (except for existing use occurring on Chair 4 Road, which would continue to be permitted and vehicular traffic on the Summit Road). Alternative 2 would provide the least potential for air quality impacts of the action alternatives and would be similar to Alternative 1.

Alternative 3 - Resource Recreation and Natural Forest Area

With the exception of alpine ski facilities, which would not be a permitted facility use in the Resource Recreation classification, implementation of Alternative 3 would allow for a range of recreational uses consistent with those detailed in the *Land Classification Compatibility Matrix for Facilities and Activities*. In general, non-motorized trail based recreation and recreational facilities have less potential to negatively impact air quality.

Alternative 4 - Recreation, Resource Recreation, and Natural Forest Area

Under Alternative 4, there would be greater opportunity for potential impacts to air quality due to the expanded range of motorized uses, such as grooming vehicles and snowmobiles that would be allowed to occur in the Recreation classification. Under this alternative, more intensive uses such as alpine ski facilities would be a permitted use. Construction and operation of facilities such as recreational trails, ski runs and lift towers have the potential to negatively impact air quality (see Section III, section 3.7.2 – Air Quality for a detailed analysis of the potential impacts associated with construction and operation of alpine ski facilities).

3.7.2.3 Mitigation Measures

Potential environmental impacts of the action alternatives would be minimized through implementation of the mitigation measures described in section 2.5 above, through project-specific permitting, and through agency prepared operational plans.

3.7.3 **Noise**

Noise effects are direct effects experienced on-site or immediately adjacent to the source. To maintain the trail systems, intermittent operation of power equipment during the summer and grooming equipment

during the winter is a source of noise on existing trails. Snowmobiles are sources of noise along trails and roads during the winter months.

3.7.3.1 Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1 - No Action

The No Action Alternative provides a baseline for comparing the effects of the action alternatives. The No Action Alternative reflects a continuation of existing management practices without applying a land classification.

Alternative 2 - Natural Forest Area

Under Alternative 2, there would be less opportunity for potential noise impacts due to the more limited range of uses that would be allowed to occur. Under this alternative, more intensive uses such as alpine ski facilities would not be permitted. Snowmobiling along the Chair 4 Road and vehicular traffic on the Summit Road would continue. Of the action alternatives, Alternative 2 would provide the least potential for noise impacts and would be similar to Alternative 1.

Alternative 3 - Resource Recreation and Natural Forest Area

With the exception of alpine ski facilities, which would not be a permitted facility use in the Resource Recreation classification, implementation of Alternative 3 would allow for a range of recreational uses consistent with those detailed in the *Land Classification Compatibility Matrix for Facilities and Activities* (see Appendix 2). In general, non-motorized trail based recreation has less potential for measurable noise impacts. There would be noise impacts associated with existing snowmobile use on Chair 4 Road and vehicular traffic on the Summit road.

Alternative 4 - Recreation, Resource Recreation, and Natural Forest Area

Under Alternative 4, there would be greater opportunity for potential noise impacts due to the expanded range of winter motorized uses that may be allowed to occur in the Recreation classification. Under this alternative, more intensive uses such as snowmobiling and alpine ski facilities would be permitted. Construction and use of facilities such as snowmobile trails (including the existing use of Chair 4 Road), ski runs and lift towers have the potential to create noise impacts (see Section III, section 3.7.3 – Noise for a detailed analysis of the potential impacts associated with construction and operation of alpine ski facilities).

3.7.3.2 Mitigation Measures

Potential environmental impacts of the action alternatives would be minimized through implementation of the mitigation measures described in section 2.5 above, through project specific permitting, and through agency prepared operational plans.

3.7.4 Land Use

3.7.4.1 Affected Environment

The PASEA lies within Spokane County and is subject to local land use regulations. The PASEA is entirely surrounded by existing State Park managed lands. Development within the park must also receive approval from other state and federal agencies for specific projects. Spokane County has zoned all of Mount Spokane State Park, including the PASEA, as Rural Conservation (RCV). Within the RCV zone, winter recreation areas, including downhill, Nordic/cross-country skiing, snowmobiling and ice-skating are permitted uses.

WAC 352-16-020 establishes a Land Classification System (LCS) for management of State Park Lands (see Appendix 2). The LCS is a system of management zoning for park lands and waters that sets forth, in a general fashion, the basic philosophy, physical features, location, activities, and developments in a park. When assigned to a specific area within a park, each classification sets an appropriate intensity for recreational activities and facilities development. For purposes of park management, the State Parks LCS takes precedence over local zoning, as in this case the RCV zoning is a general land use designation where the LCS provides detailed management direction by the agency. Classifications are aligned along a spectrum ranging from low to high-intensity recreational uses and developments. By classifying park lands, the agency is able to consciously strike a balance between protecting park resources and providing an appropriate variety of recreational opportunities to park visitors.

3.7.4.2 Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1 - No Action

The No Action Alternative provides a baseline for comparing the effects of the action alternatives. The No Action Alternative reflects a continuation of existing land use and management practices without applying a land classification for the PASEA.

Alternative 2 - Natural Forest Area

Under Alternative 2, more intensive uses such as alpine ski facilities would not be a permitted use. Of the action alternatives, Alternative 2 would provide the least potential for land use impacts, as the entire currently undeveloped PASEA acreage would be designated Natural Forest Area. Since no alpine or backcountry skiing would be allowed under Alternative 2, this change in land classification would likely result in the removal of the PASEA from the current MS 2000 Concessionaire Agreement.

Alternative 3 - Resource Recreation and Natural Forest Area

With the exception of alpine ski facilities, which would not be a permitted facility use in the Resource Recreation classification, implementation of Alternative 3 would allow for a range of recreational uses consistent with those detailed in the *Land Classification Compatibility Matrix for Facilities and Activities* (see Appendix 2). None of these uses are anticipated to have a negative impact on land use. Similar to Alternative 2, classifying a portion of the PASEA as Natural Forest Area would likely result in removing Natural Forest Area lands from the current MS 2000 Concessionaire Agreement.

Alternative 4 - Recreation, Resource Recreation, and Natural Forest Area

Under Alternative 4 lands within the PASEA would be classified as Recreation, Resource Recreation and Natural Forest Area. Alternative 4 of this nonproject action also considers potential reclassification of approximately 20 acres south of the PASEA from Resource Recreation to Recreation as well as reclassification of approximately 1 acre from Heritage to Recreation in the vicinity of the Vista House. Under Alternative 4 there would be an expanded range of winter motorized uses (e.g., grooming equipment) that may be allowed to occur in the Recreation classification and more intensive uses such as alpine ski facilities would be a permitted use. However, none of the uses contained in the *Land Classification Compatibility Matrix for Facilities and Activities* (see Appendix 2) in the Recreation classification are anticipated to have an impact on land use (see Section III, section 3.7.4 – Land Use for a detailed analysis of the potential impacts associated with construction and operation of alpine ski facilities). Similar to Alternatives 2 and 3, classifying a portion of the PASEA as Natural Forest Area would likely result in removing Natural Forest Area lands from the current MS 2000 Concessionaire Agreement.

3.7.4.3 Mitigation Measures

No specific mitigation measures beyond compliance with local, state and federal regulations are proposed.

3.7.5 Transportation and Parking

3.7.5.1 Affected Environment

Accessibility to Mount Spokane Ski and Snowboard Park is provided by U.S. Highway 206, which is in good condition and is maintained by the state. The park access road to the base area is an asphalt surface in mostly good condition, and it is maintained by State Parks. The only road in the PASEA is a portion of the Summit Road and the Chair 4 Road, which does not carry public vehicular traffic. Due to the topography and terrain in the PASEA, it is unlikely that new parking facilities or new roads would be constructed.

3.7.5.2 Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1 - No Action

The No Action Alternative provides a baseline for comparing the effects of the action alternatives. The No Action Alternative reflects a continuation of existing management practices without applying a land classification.

Alternative 2 - Natural Forest Area

Under Alternative 2, there would be less opportunity for potential impacts to parking and transportation due to the more limited range of uses that would be allowed to occur. Under this alternative, more intensive uses such as alpine ski facilities would not be a permitted use. Of the action alternatives, Alternative 2 would provide the least potential for parking and transportation impacts and would be similar to Alternative 1.

Alternative 3 - Resource Recreation and Natural Forest Area

With the exception of alpine ski facilities, which would not be a permitted facility use in the Resource Recreation classification, implementation of Alternative 3 would allow for a range of recreational uses consistent with those detailed in the *Land Classification Compatibility Matrix for Facilities and Activities*. This Alternative would provide more potential for parking and transportation impacts than Alternatives 1 and 2.

Alternative 4 - Recreation, Resource Recreation, and Natural Forest Area

Under Alternative 4, a broader range of uses would be allowed to occur in the Recreation classification. Under this alternative, more intensive uses such as alpine ski facilities would be a permitted use. This alternative has the most potential for parking and transportation impacts (see Section III, section 3.7.5 – Transportation and Parking for a detailed analysis of the potential impacts associated with construction and operation of alpine ski facilities).

3.7.5.3 Mitigation Measures

No specific mitigation measures beyond compliance with local, state and federal regulations are proposed.

3.7.6 Public Services

3.7.6.1 Affected Environment

State Parks utilizes an on-going "risk management" approach for public services, including prompt correction of unsafe conditions (facilities, work environment, etc.), adequate emergency preparedness and training, effective law enforcement coordination, and participation with park users and neighbors to improve the overall safety of the park environment. Park staff will continue to coordinate with regional staff, headquarters' Chief of Visitor Protection and Law Enforcement, local emergency service providers, and other interested individuals to formulate and implement additional management policies and prescriptions as necessary to ensure the overall safety of park visitors and park staff.

<u>Maintenance</u>: Park staff will monitor park facilities on a regular basis to identify deficiencies that potentially could impact public or staff health, safety, and welfare, and take appropriate follow up measures. Facility deficiencies will be addressed through routine and planned maintenance, and capital projects.

EMS and Fire Response: Permanent park staff is required to maintain a current first aid and CPR certification. Park staff will continue improving communications and coordination with DNR, local fire, and EMS districts to ultimately decrease response times and enhance emergency preparedness. Current contracts with Fire Districts in both Spokane County and Kootenai County (Idaho) will be continued and enhanced as appropriate.

<u>Law Enforcement</u>: Initially ranger contacts are geared towards compliance through education and interpretation; however, at times rangers must modify public behavior by use of selected actions

which may include issuing notices of infractions, citation, or physical arrests if resources or people are at risk.

<u>Volunteers</u>: Park staff will continue to work with volunteers, user groups, and neighbors to encourage reporting of hazardous conditions and unauthorized uses.

<u>Emergency Reporting</u>: Park staff will continue to promote awareness of existing systems for reporting park-related emergencies including fires, crimes, injuries, and unauthorized park uses.

<u>Police Services</u>: Park rangers are the point of first contact for police services at the Park, with backup as needed from the Spokane County Sheriff's Office.

<u>Fire Protection</u>: Structural fire protection is provided through contract with the Mead Fire District. The Washington Department of Natural Resources is responsible for wildland fire control.

<u>Emergency Medical Services</u>: The Mead Fire District provides emergency services at the Park. Park staff has CPR and first aid training and provides first response services in most circumstances.

<u>Community Services</u>: Community services, such as medical services, housing, schools, and other public services, are provided by the Mead School District, City of Mead and Spokane County.

3.7.6.2 Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1 - No Action

The No Action Alternative provides a baseline for comparing the effects of the action alternatives. The No Action Alternative reflects a continuation of existing management practices without applying a land classification.

Alternative 2 - Natural Forest Area

Under Alternative 2 there would be less opportunity for potential impacts to public services due to the more limited range of uses that would be allowed to occur. Under this alternative, more intensive uses such as alpine ski facilities would not be a permitted use. However, as Alternative 2 would likely result in the removal of the PASEA from the concession area boundary, management/safety related issues may be fully or partially shifted to park staff which could potentially create additional demands on public service providers.

Alternative 3 - Resource Recreation and Natural Forest Area

With the exception of alpine ski facilities, which would not be a permitted facility use in the Resource Recreation classification, implementation of Alternative 3 would allow for an expanded range of recreational uses above current conditions consistent with those detailed in the *Land Classification Compatibility Matrix for Facilities and Activities* (see Appendix 2). In general, the combination of increased visitation, potential construction of additional recreational facilities, and access into new portions of the park would be expected to result in some increased demand for public services. The level

of this demand has not been quantified, but would be expected to incrementally increase with the phased development of facilities.

A minimal increase in demand could occur for police services. Contributing factors in this demand include: increased visitation, access into new areas within the PASEA, and potential conflicts among users of the multi-use trail systems. No significant increases in park staffing are expected; consequently impacts on schools, government services, or other community services would be expected to be minimal.

Alternative 4 - Recreation, Resource Recreation, and Natural Forest Area

Under Alternative 4, a broader range of uses would be allowed to occur in the Recreation classification. However, impacts are anticipated to be similar to but better than those described above in Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 due to the increased access to the area by emergency services (see Section III, section 3.7.6 – Public Services for a detailed analysis of the potential impacts associated with construction and operation of alpine ski facilities).

3.7.6.3 Mitigation Measures

No specific mitigation measures beyond compliance with local, state and federal regulations are proposed.

3.7.7 Environmental Health

3.7.7.1 Affected Environment

The PASEA has a limited amount of recreational facilities including Chair 4 Road, the Summit Road and Trail #140. Vehicle exhaust, noise, and traffic normally associated with recreational activities, such as snowmobiling and vehicular access to trails and the summit, are present.

3.7.7.2 Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1 - No Action

The No Action Alternative provides a baseline for comparing the effects of the action alternatives. The No Action Alternative reflects a continuation of existing management practices without applying a land classification.

Alternative 2 - Natural Forest Area

Under Alternative 2, there would be less opportunity for potential impacts to environmental health due to the more limited range of uses that would be allowed to occur. Under this alternative, more intensive uses such as alpine ski facilities would not be a permitted use. Mount Spokane State Park, and the PASEA in particular, are relatively isolated so exhaust, noise and traffic generated by park users is unlikely to affect adjacent property owners or the general public.

Alternative 3 - Resource Recreation and Natural Forest Area

With the exception of alpine ski facilities, which would not be a permitted facility use in the Resource Recreation classification, implementation of Alternative 3 would allow for an expanded range of

recreational uses above current conditions consistent with those detailed in the *Land Classification Compatibility Matrix for Facilities and Activities* (see Appendix 2). Mount Spokane State Park and the PASEA in particular are relatively isolated so exhaust, noise and traffic generated by park users is unlikely to affect adjacent property owners or the general public.

Alternative 4 - Recreation, Resource Recreation, and Natural Forest Area

Under Alternative 4, a broader range of uses would be allowed to occur in the Recreation classification. Under this alternative, more intensive uses such as alpine ski facilities would be a permitted use. Mount Spokane State Park, and the PASEA in particular, are relatively isolated, so exhaust, noise and traffic generated by park users is unlikely to affect adjacent property owners or the general public (see Section III, section 3.7.7 – Environmental Health for a detailed analysis of the potential impacts associated with construction and operation of alpine ski facilities).

3.7.7.3 Mitigation Measures

No specific mitigation measures beyond compliance with local, state and federal regulations are proposed.

3.7.8 Utilities

3.7.8.1 Affected Environment

Mount Spokane Ski and Snowboard Park receives electrical power through service from Avista. Electricity arrives and is distributed via underground cable. Avista also provides power to the TV/communications towers at the summit of Mount Spokane. No septic, water or sewer services are currently provided in the PASEA; however, electricity is available.

3.7.8.2 Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1 - No Action

The No Action Alternative provides a baseline for comparing the effects of the action alternatives. The No Action Alternative reflects a continuation of existing management practices without applying a land classification.

Alternative 2 - Natural Forest Area

Under Alternative 2, there would be less opportunity for potential impacts to utilities due to the more limited range of uses that would be allowed to occur. Under this alternative, more intensive uses such as alpine ski facilities would not be permitted. Potential impacts to utilities are expected to be minimal and similar to Alternative 1.

Alternative 3 - Resource Recreation and Natural Forest Area

With the exception of alpine ski facilities, which would not be a permitted facility use in the Resource Recreation classification, implementation of Alternative 3 would allow for an expanded range of recreational uses above current conditions consistent with those detailed in the *Land Classification Compatibility Matrix for Facilities and Activities* (see Appendix 2). Under this alternative, development

would primarily include non-motorized trails so the potential impact to electricity, water, and septic utilities is expected to be minimal and similar to Alternatives 1, 2 and 4.

Alternative 4 - Recreation, Resource Recreation, and Natural Forest Area

Under Alternative 4, a broader range of uses would be allowed to occur in the Recreation classification. Under this alternative, more intensive uses such as alpine ski facilities would be a permitted use; however, potential impacts to utilities are expected to be minimal and similar to Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 (see Section III, section 3.7.8 – Utilities for a detailed analysis of the potential impacts associated with construction and operation of alpine ski facilities).

3.7.8.3 Mitigation Measures

No specific mitigation measures beyond compliance with local, state and federal regulations are proposed.

FIGURE II-1: PASEA LAND CLASSIFICATION ALTERNATIVE 1 - NO ACTION

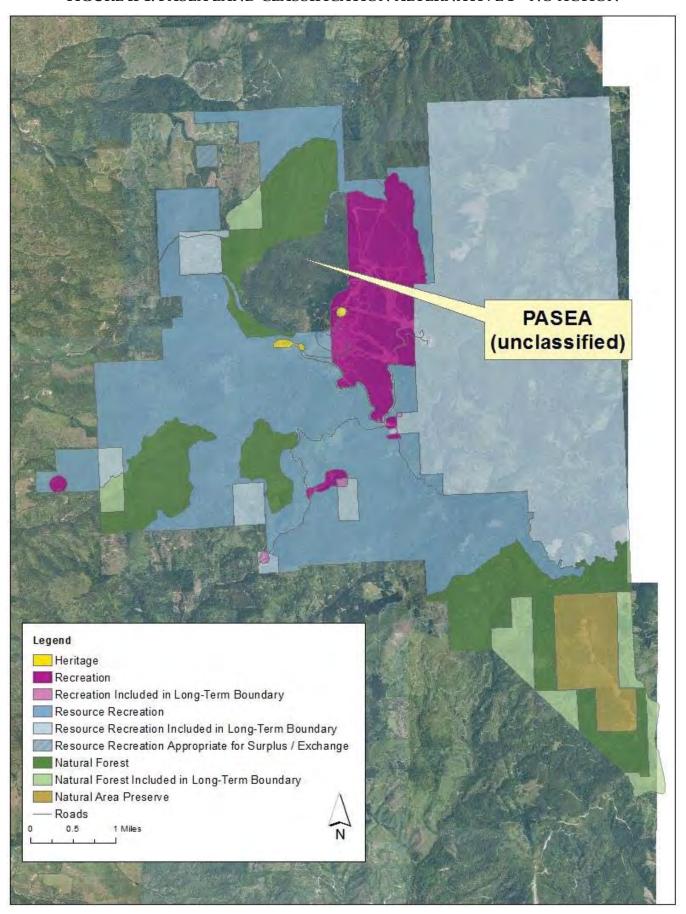


FIGURE II-2: PASEA LAND CLASSIFICATION ALTERNATIVE 2 - NATURAL FOREST AREA

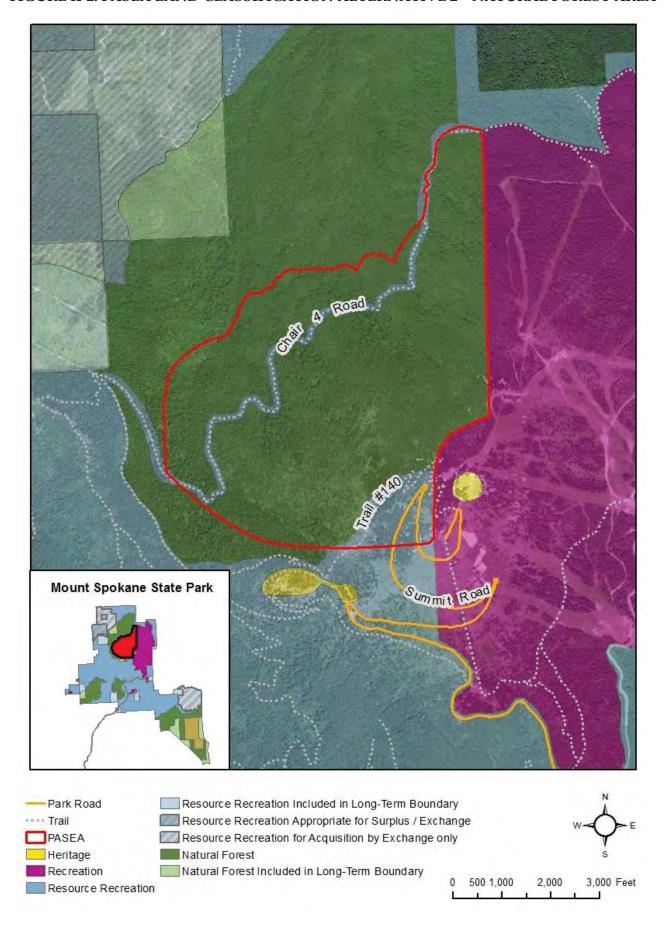


FIGURE II-3: PASEA LAND CLASSIFICATION ALTERNATIVE 3 – RESOURCE RECREATION AND NATURAL FOREST AREA

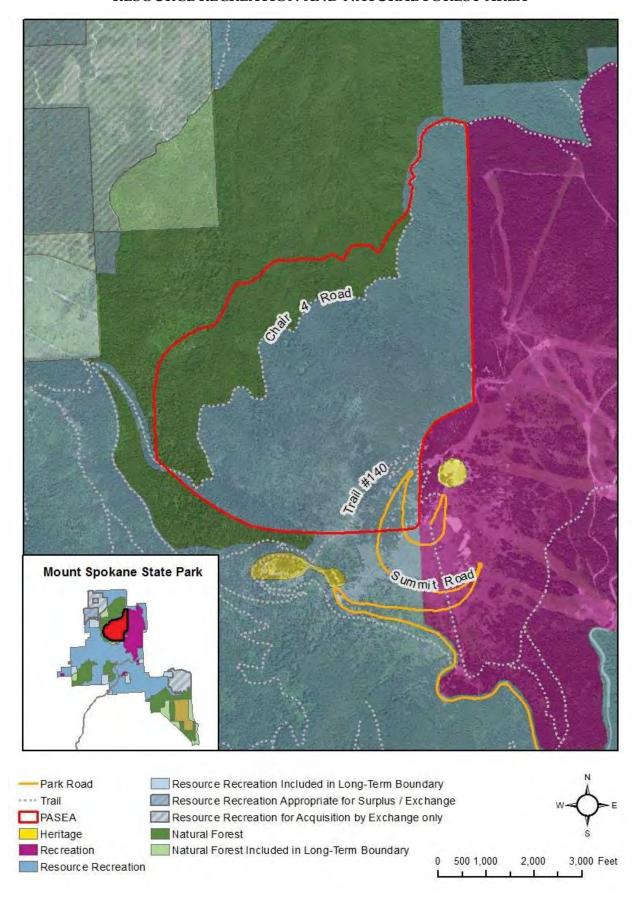


FIGURE II-4: PASEA LAND CLASSIFICATION ALTERNATIVE 4 – RECREATION, RESOURCE RECREATION AND NATURAL FOREST AREA

